

Wuthering Heights Polarization

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Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë
<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/768>

Negative [-7.0..-2.0]

The latter had never been under-drawn: its entire anatomy lay bare to an inquiring eye, except where a frame of wood laden with oatcakes and clusters of legs of beef, mutton, and ham, concealed it.

I thought her conduct must be prompted by a species of dreary fun; and, now that we were alone, I endeavoured to interest her in my distress.

Do point out some landmarks by which I may know my way home: I have no more idea how to get there than you would have how to get to London!

Fortunately, the beasts seemed more bent on stretching their paws, and yawning, and flourishing their tails, than devouring me alive; but they would suffer no resurrection, and I was forced to lie till their malignant masters pleased to deliver me: then, hatless and trembling with wrath, I ordered the miscreants to let me out--on their peril to keep me one minute longer--with several incoherent threats of retaliation that, in their indefinite depth of virulence, smacked of King Lear.

I muttered, knocking my knuckles through the glass, and stretching an arm out to seize the importunate branch; instead of which, my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand!

I seemed to keep them closed above a quarter of an hour; yet, the instant I listened again, there was the doleful cry moaning on!

I did not know whether to resent this language or pursue my explanation; but he seemed so powerfully affected that I took pity and proceeded with my dreams; affirming I had never heard the appellation of 'Catherine Linton' before, but reading it often over produced an impression which personified itself when I had no longer my imagination under control.

He stood by the fire, his back towards me, just finishing a stormy scene with poor Zillah; who ever and anon interrupted her labour to pluck up the corner of her apron, and heave an indignant groan.

Heathcliff had gone to loose the beast, and shift it to his own stall; he was passing behind it, when Hindley finished his speech by knocking him under its feet, and without stopping to examine whether his hopes were fulfilled, ran away as fast as he could.

This was especially to be remarked if any one attempted to impose upon, or domineer over, his favourite: he was painfully jealous lest a word should be spoken amiss to him; seeming to have got into his head the

notion that, because he liked Heathcliff, all hated, and longed to do him an ill-turn.

A wild,

wicked slip she was--but she had the bonniest eye, the sweetest smile, and lightest foot in the parish: and, after all, I believe she meant no harm; for when once she made you cry in good earnest, it seldom happened that she would not keep you company, and oblige you to be quiet that you might comfort her.

I thought there was something wrong as he set down the light; and seizing the children each by an arm, whispered them to 'frame up-stairs, and make little din--they might pray alone that evening--he had summut to do.'

He would not even have seen after their going to church on Sundays, only Joseph and the curate reprimanded his carelessness when they absented themselves; and that reminded him to order Heathcliff a flogging, and Catherine a fast from dinner or supper.

The household went to bed; and I, too, anxious to lie down, opened my lattice and put my head out to hearken, though it rained: determined to admit them in spite of the prohibition, should they return.

The devil had seized her ankle, Nelly: I heard his abominable snorting.

Heathcliff received no flogging, but he was told that the first word he spoke to Miss Catherine should ensure a dismissal; and Mrs. Earnshaw undertook to keep her sister-in-law in due restraint when she returned home; employing art, not force: with force she would have found it impossible.

With that he dashed headforemost out of the room, amid the merriment of the master and mistress, and to the serious disturbance of Catherine; who could not comprehend how her remarks should have produced such an exhibition of bad temper.

You must go up and offer to kiss her, and say--you know best what to say; only do it heartily, and not as if you thought her converted into a stranger by her grand dress.

I did

not call her unfeeling long; for I perceived she was in purgatory throughout the day, and wearying to find an opportunity of getting by herself, or paying a visit to Heathcliff, who had been locked up by the master: as I discovered, on endeavouring to introduce to him a private mess of victuals.

A person who has not done one-half his day's work by ten o'clock, runs a chance of leaving the other half undone.'

One state resembles setting a hungry man down to a

single dish, on which he may concentrate his entire appetite and do it justice; the other, introducing him to a table laid out by French cooks: he can perhaps extract as much enjoyment from the whole; but each part is a mere atom in his regard and remembrance.'

You could not open a book in this library that I have not looked into, and got something out of also: unless it be that range of Greek and Latin, and that of French; and those I know one from another: it is as much as you can expect of a poor man's daughter.

When Kenneth warned him that his medicines were useless at that stage of the malady, and he needn't put him to further expense by attending her, he retorted, 'I know you need not--she's well--she does not want any more attendance from you!

He delighted to witness Hindley degrading himself past redemption; and became daily more notable for savage sullenness and ferocity.

I own

I did not like her, after infancy was past; and I vexed her frequently by trying to bring down her arrogance: she never took an aversion to me, though.

I rather think his appearance there was distasteful to Catherine; she was not artful, never played the coquette, and had evidently an objection to her two friends meeting at all; for when Heathcliff expressed contempt of Linton in his presence, she could not half coincide, as she did in his absence; and when Linton evinced disgust and antipathy to Heathcliff, she dared not treat his sentiments with indifference, as if depreciation of her playmate were of scarcely any consequence to her.

I've

said I did not love her, and rather relished mortifying her vanity now and then: besides, she hurt me extremely; so I started up from my knees, and screamed out, 'Oh, Miss, that's a nasty trick!

Little Hareton, who followed me everywhere, and was sitting near me on the floor, at seeing my tears commenced crying himself, and sobbed out complaints against 'wicked aunt Cathy,' which drew her fury on to his unlucky head: she seized his shoulders, and shook him till the poor child waxed livid, and Edgar thoughtlessly laid hold of her hands to deliver him.

I've

no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven; and if the wicked man in there had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn't have thought of it.

Edgar Linton came yesterday by chance, Hindley; and it was I who

told him to be off: because I knew you would not like to have met him as you were.'

And now that she is vanished to her rest, and I have meditated for another hour or two, I shall summon courage to go also, in spite of aching laziness of head and limbs.

There were no mutual concessions: one stood erect, and the others yielded: and who can be ill-natured and bad-tempered when they encounter neither opposition nor indifference?

He concealed it from her; but if ever he heard me answer sharply, or saw any other servant grow cloudy at some imperious order of hers, he would show his trouble by a frown of displeasure that never darkened on his own account.

Not to grieve a kind master, I learned to be less touchy; and, for the space of half a year, the gunpowder lay as harmless as sand, because no fire came near to explode it.

Catherine had seasons of gloom and silence now and then: they were respected with sympathising silence by her husband, who ascribed them to an alteration in her constitution, produced by her perilous illness; as she was never subject to depression of spirits before.

Ere long, I heard the click of the latch, and Catherine flew up-stairs, breathless and wild; too excited to show gladness: indeed, by her face, you would rather have surmised an awful calamity.

But the lady's glowed with another feeling when her friend appeared at the door: she sprang forward, took both his hands, and led him to Linton; and then she seized Linton's reluctant fingers and crushed them into his.

If that creature knew how bitter, he'd be ashamed to cloud its removal with idle petulance.

But one day, when she had been peculiarly wayward, rejecting her breakfast, complaining that the servants did not do what she told them; that the mistress would allow her to be nothing in the house, and Edgar neglected her; that she had caught a cold with the doors being left open, and we let the parlour fire go out on purpose to vex her, with a hundred yet more frivolous accusations, Mrs. Linton peremptorily insisted that she should get to bed; and, having scolded her heartily, threatened to send for the doctor.

I never say to him, "Let this or that enemy

alone, because it would be ungenerous or cruel to harm them;" I say, "Let them alone, because I should hate them to be wronged:" and he'd crush you like a sparrow's egg, Isabella, if he found you a troublesome charge. What malevolence you must have to wish to convince me that there is no happiness in the world!

The poor thing couldn't bear that; she grew white and red in rapid succession, and, while tears beaded her lashes, bent the strength of her small fingers to loosen the firm clutch of Catherine; and perceiving that as fast as she raised one finger off her arm another closed down, and she could not remove the whole together, she began to make use of her nails; and their sharpness presently ornamented the detainer's with crescents of red.

I gazed long at the weather-worn block; and, stooping down, perceived a hole near the bottom still full of snail-shells and pebbles, which we were fond of storing there with more perishable things; and, as fresh as reality, it appeared that I beheld my early playmate seated on the withered turf: his dark, square head bent forward, and his little hand scooping out the earth with a piece of slate.'

He raised his missile to hurl it; I commenced a soothing speech, but could not stay his hand: the stone struck my bonnet; and then ensued, from the stammering lips of the little fellow, a string of curses, which, whether he comprehended them or not, were delivered with practised emphasis, and distorted his baby features into a shocking expression of malignity.

Had Edgar never gathered our

conversation, he would never have been the worse for it.

Really, when he

opened on me in that unreasonable tone of displeasure after I had scolded Heathcliff till I was hoarse for him, I did not care hardly what they did to each other; especially as I felt that, however the scene closed, we should all be driven asunder for nobody knows how long!

I wish I were a girl again, half

savage and hardy, and free; and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them!

There was no moon, and

everything beneath lay in misty darkness: not a light gleamed from any house, far or near all had been extinguished long ago: and those at Wuthering Heights were never visible--still she asserted she caught their shining.

Notwithstanding my hurry, I

stayed to examine it, lest ever after I should have the conviction impressed on my imagination that it was a creature of the other world.

I spared

a minute to open the gate for it, but instead of going to the house door, it coursed up and down snuffing the grass, and would have escaped to the road, had I not seized it and conveyed it in with me.

To me, he signified the threatening

danger was not so much death, as permanent alienation of intellect.

It

appeared dry and cold; but at the bottom was dotted in with pencil an obscure apology, and an entreaty for kind remembrance and reconciliation, if her proceeding had offended him: asserting that she could not help it then, and being done, she had now no power to repeal it.

'Yes--we came just now,' I said; 'but he left me by the kitchen door; and when I would have gone in, your little boy played sentinel over the place, and frightened me off by the help of a bull-dog.'

I sat and thought a doleful time: the clock struck eight, and nine, and still my companion paced to and fro, his head bent on his breast, and perfectly silent, unless a groan or a bitter ejaculation forced itself out at intervals.

I will have it back; and I'll have his gold too; and then his blood; and hell shall have his soul!

You

may call at Wuthering Heights this afternoon, if you like, and say that I am not angry, but I'm sorry to have lost her; especially as I can never think she'll be happy.

But,

till then--if you don't believe me, you don't know me--till then, I would have died by inches before I touched a single hair of his head!'

I thought I prevented

another explosion by my compliance; and I thought, too, it might create a favourable crisis in Catherine's mental illness: and then I remembered Mr. Edgar's stern rebuke of my carrying tales; and I tried to smooth away all disquietude on the subject, by affirming, with frequent iteration, that that betrayal of trust, if it merited so harsh an appellation, should be the last.

The flash of her eyes

had been succeeded by a dreamy and melancholy softness; they no longer gave the impression of looking at the objects around her: they appeared always to gaze beyond, and far beyond--you would have said out of this world.

I

shall not pity you, not I.

After a pause and a prolonged gaze, she resumed; addressing me in accents of indignant disappointment:--

'Oh, you see, Nelly, he would not relent a moment to keep me out of the grave.

I

have not broken your heart--you have broken it; and in breaking it, you have broken mine.

He would have risen, and unfixed her fingers by the act--she clung fast, gasping: there was mad resolution in her face.

'I shall not refuse to go out of doors,' he answered; 'but I shall stay in the garden: and, Nelly, mind you keep your word to-morrow.

The latter's distraction at his bereavement

is a subject too painful to be dwelt on; its after-effects showed how deep the sorrow sunk.

He dashed his head against the knotted trunk; and, lifting up his eyes, howled, not like a man, but like a savage beast being goaded to death with knives and spears.

I held no communication with him:

still, I was conscious of his design to enter, if he could; and on the Tuesday, a little after dark, when my master, from sheer fatigue, had been compelled to retire a couple of hours, I went and opened one of the windows; moved by his perseverance to give him a chance of bestowing on the faded image of his idol one final adieu.

Heathcliff had opened the trinket and cast out its contents, replacing them by a black lock of his own.

Necessity compelled me to seek shelter here; though, if I had not learned he was out of the way, I'd have halted at the kitchen, washed my face, warmed myself, got you to bring what I wanted, and departed again to anywhere out of the reach of my accursed--of that incarnate goblin!

It's a pity Earnshaw is not

his match in strength: I wouldn't have run till I'd seen him all but demolished, had Hindley been able to do it!

Now, I have the satisfaction of

being sure that he detests me, to the point of its annoying him seriously to have me within ear-shot or eyesight: I notice, when I enter his presence, the muscles of his countenance are involuntarily distorted into an expression of hatred; partly arising from his knowledge of the good causes I have to feel that sentiment for him, and partly from original aversion.

Consequently, he rose, in

suicidal low spirits, as fit for the church as for a dance; and instead, he sat down by the fire and swallowed gin or brandy by tumblerfuls.

'With that I shut the window and returned to my place by the fire; having too small a stock of hypocrisy at my command to pretend any anxiety for

the danger that menaced him.

She wouldn't have borne your abominable behaviour
quietly: her detestation and disgust must have found voice."

For a few days, I

said, he seemed regardless of the puny successor to the departed: that
coldness melted as fast as snow in April, and ere the tiny thing could
stammer a word or totter a step it wielded a despot's sceptre in his
heart.

When his ship struck, the captain abandoned
his post; and the crew, instead of trying to save her, rushed into riot
and confusion, leaving no hope for their luckless vessel.

'Well, Nelly,' said he, riding into the yard one morning, too early not
to alarm me with an instant presentiment of bad news, 'it's yours and my
turn to go into mourning at present.

CHAPTER XVIII

The twelve years, continued Mrs. Dean, following that dismal period were
the happiest of my life: my greatest troubles in their passage rose from
our little lady's trifling illnesses, which she had to experience in
common with all children, rich and poor.

And if he reproved her, even by a look, you
would have thought it a heart-breaking business: I don't believe he ever
did speak a harsh word to her.

My master hesitated not a moment in complying with her
request: reluctant as he was to leave home at ordinary calls, he flew to
answer this; commanding Catherine to my peculiar vigilance, in his
absence, with reiterated orders that she must not wander out of the park,
even under my escort he did not calculate on her going unaccompanied.
Catherine came to me, one morning, at eight o'clock, and said she was
that day an Arabian merchant, going to cross the Desert with his caravan;
and I must give her plenty of provision for herself and beasts: a horse,
and three camels, personated by a large hound and a couple of pointers.

'Papa charged me
nothing: he'll not scold me, Ellen--he's never cross, like you!'

I whispered; 'people can have many cousins and of all
sorts, Miss Cathy, without being any the worse for it; only they needn't
keep their company, if they be disagreeable and bad.'

He appeared

to have bent his malevolence on making him a brute: he was never taught
to read or write; never rebuked for any bad habit which did not annoy his
keeper; never led a single step towards virtue, or guarded by a single
precept against vice.

Joseph had instilled into him a pride of name, and of his lineage; he would, had he dared, have fostered hate between him and the present owner of the Heights: but his dread of that owner amounted to superstition; and he confined his feelings regarding him to muttered innuendoes and private comminations.

I could gather, however, that her guide had been a favourite till she hurt his feelings by addressing him as a servant; and Heathcliff's housekeeper hurt hers by calling him her cousin.

A pale, delicate, effeminate boy, who might have been taken for my master's younger brother, so strong was the resemblance: but there was a sickly peevishness in his aspect that Edgar Linton never had.

Edgar Linton was silent a minute; an expression of exceeding sorrow overcast his features: he would have pitied the child on his own account; but, recalling Isabella's hopes and fears, and anxious wishes for her son, and her commendations of him to his care, he grieved bitterly at the prospect of yielding him up, and searched in his heart how it might be avoided.

The poor thing was finally got off, with several delusive assurances that his absence should be short: that Mr. Edgar and Cathy would visit him, and other promises, equally ill-founded, which I invented and reiterated at intervals throughout the way.

He did not thoroughly comprehend the meaning of his father's speech, or whether it were intended for him: indeed, he was not yet certain that the grim, sneering stranger was his father.

And he must have a fire in the middle of summer; and Joseph's bacca-pipe is poison; and he must always have sweets and dainties, and always milk, milk for ever--heeding naught how the rest of us are pinched in winter; and there he'll sit, wrapped in his furred cloak in his chair by the fire, with some toast and water or other slop on the hob to sip at; and if Hareton, for pity, comes to amuse him--Hareton is not bad-natured, though he's rough--they're sure to part, one swearing and the other crying.

'I thought you did not know me, or you wouldn't have spoken in that way.'
If the dead villain could rise from his grave to abuse me for his offspring's wrongs, I should have the fun of seeing the said offspring fight him back again, indignant that he should dare to rail at the one friend he has in the world!' He was about to enlarge further, but the two youngsters broke into a noisy fit of merriment: my giddy miss being

delighted to discover that she might turn his strange talk to matter of amusement.

Next day it all came out, sadly to my chagrin; and still I was not altogether sorry: I thought the burden of directing and warning would be more efficiently borne by him than me.

'No, it was not because I disliked Mr. Heathcliff, but because Mr. Heathcliff dislikes me; and is a most diabolical man, delighting to wrong and ruin those he hates, if they give him the slightest opportunity.'

'But Mr. Heathcliff was quite cordial, papa,' observed Catherine, not at all convinced; 'and he didn't object to our seeing each other: he said I might come to his house when I pleased; only I must not tell you, because you had quarrelled with him, and would not forgive him for marrying aunt Isabella.'

Never did any bird flying back to a plundered nest, which it had left brimful of chirping young ones, express more complete despair, in its anguished cries and flutterings, than she by her single 'Oh!'

and you must have led the way in writing such absurdities: he would not have thought of beginning, I'm certain.'

The invalid

complained of being covered with ashes; but he had a tiresome cough, and looked feverish and ill, so I did not rebuke his temper.

Hareton

never touches me: he never struck me in his life.

'But I couldn't have been hurt by that little push, and I had no idea that you could, either: you're not much, are you, Linton?'

'You can't alter what you've done,' he replied pettishly, shrinking from her, 'unless you alter it for the worse by teasing me into a fever.'

Not so my companion: she ran back in terror, knelt down, and cried, and soothed, and entreated, till he grew quiet from lack of breath: by no means from compunction at distressing her.

We sat down in the window-seat; I assured her I would not scold, whatever her secret might be, and I guessed it, of course; so she commenced--

'I've been to Wuthering Heights, Ellen, and I've never missed going a day since you fell ill; except thrice before, and twice after you left your room.'

He advanced direct to us, seized Linton by the arm, and swung him off the seat.

At last his cries were choked by a dreadful fit of coughing; blood gushed from his mouth, and he fell on the ground.

I sobbed and wept so

that my eyes were almost blind; and the ruffian you have such sympathy with stood opposite: presuming every now and then to bid me "wisht," and denying that it was his fault; and, finally, frightened by my assertions that I would tell papa, and that he should be put in prison and hanged, he commenced blubbering himself, and hurried out to hide his cowardly agitation.

It had appeared wrong to take the journey once; now it seemed wrong to refrain.

He'll never let his friends be at ease, and he'll never be at ease himself!

I can't be prevented from going to Wuthering Heights, except by inflicting misery on two people; whereas, if you'll only not tell papa, my going need disturb the tranquillity of none.

We have done nothing to deserve this separation; and you are not angry with me: you have no reason to dislike me, you allow, yourself.

It was not the case, in reality, I am aware; but it was, in my imagination, that dismal night; and I thought Heathcliff himself less guilty than I.

I inquired, perceiving that the wretched creature had no power to sympathize with his cousin's mental tortures. As you hate them both, you'd not miss them: they can only be a daily plague to your unnatural heart.'

And

I bribed the sexton to pull it away when I'm laid there, and slide mine out too; I'll have it made so: and then by the time Linton gets to us he'll not know which is which!'

I exclaimed; 'were you not ashamed to disturb the dead?'

It

was a strange way of killing: not by inches, but by fractions of hairbreadths, to beguile me with the spectre of a hope through eighteen years!'

Mr. Heathcliff paused and wiped his forehead; his hair clung to it, wet with perspiration; his eyes were fixed on the red embers of the fire, the brows not contracted, but raised next the temples; diminishing the grim aspect of his countenance, but imparting a peculiar look of trouble, and a painful appearance of mental tension towards one absorbing subject.

She sometimes came into the kitchen all wildered like, and looked as if she would fain beg assistance; but I was not going to disobey the master: I never dare disobey him, Mrs. Dean; and, though I thought it wrong that Kenneth

should not be sent for, it was no concern of mine either to advise or complain, and I always refused to meddle.

She didn't thank him; still, he

felt gratified that she had accepted his assistance, and ventured to stand behind as she examined them, and even to stoop and point out what struck his fancy in certain old pictures which they contained; nor was he daunted by the saucy style in which she jerked the page from his finger: he contented himself with going a bit farther back and looking at her instead of the book.

Those books, both prose and verse, are consecrated to me by other associations; and I hate to have them debased and profaned in his mouth!

I supposed I should be condemned in Hareton Earnshaw's heart, if not by his mouth, to the lowest pit in the infernal regions if I showed my unfortunate person in his neighbourhood then; and feeling very mean and malignant, I skulked round to seek refuge in the kitchen.

For one thing, she was forbidden to move out of the garden, and it fretted her sadly to be confined to its narrow bounds as spring drew on; for another, in following the house, I was forced to quit her frequently, and she complained of loneliness: she preferred quarrelling with Joseph in the kitchen to sitting at peace in her solitude.

Earnshaw sat,

morose as usual, at the chimney corner, and my little mistress was beguiling an idle hour with drawing pictures on the window-panes, varying her amusement by smothered bursts of songs, and whispered ejaculations, and quick glances of annoyance and impatience in the direction of her cousin, who steadfastly smoked, and looked into the grate.

'I shall have naught to do wi' you and your mucky pride, and your damned mocking tricks!'

Catherine, by instinct, must have divined it was obdurate perversity, and not dislike, that prompted this dogged conduct; for, after remaining an instant undecided, she stooped and impressed on his cheek a gentle kiss.

The little rogue thought I had not seen her, and, drawing back, she took her former station by the window, quite demurely.

'He'll not obey you, wicked man, any more,' said Catherine; 'and he'll soon detest you as much as I do.'

Then she comprehended that Earnshaw took the master's reputation home to himself; and was attached by ties stronger than reason could break--chains, forged by habit, which it would be cruel to attempt to loosen.

Well, I reflected, there was

never a pleasanter, or more harmless sight; and it will be a burning shame to scold them.

The entire world is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her!
And it is

like bending back a stiff spring: it is by compulsion that I do the slightest act not prompted by one thought; and by compulsion that I notice anything alive or dead, which is not associated with one universal idea.

I set his plate to keep warm on the fender; and after an hour or two he re-entered, when the room was clear, in no degree calmer: the same unnatural--it was unnatural--appearance of joy under his black brows; the same bloodless hue, and his teeth visible, now and then, in a kind of smile; his frame shivering, not as one shivers with chill or weakness, but as a tight-stretched cord vibrates--a strong thrilling, rather than trembling.

Oh, Mr. Lockwood, I cannot express what a terrible start I got by the momentary view!

You

must have forgotten the contents of the book, and you may not have space to search it now.

'They won't do that,' he replied: 'if they did, you must have me removed secretly; and if you neglect it you shall prove, practically, that the dead are not annihilated!'

I concealed the fact of his having swallowed nothing for four days, fearing it might lead to trouble, and then, I am persuaded, he did not abstain on purpose: it was the consequence of his strange illness, not the cause.

I was going to the Grange one evening--a dark evening, threatening thunder--and, just at the turn of the Heights, I encountered a little boy with a sheep and two lambs before him; he was crying terribly; and I supposed the lambs were skittish, and would not be guided.

As they stepped on to the door-stones, and halted to take a last look at the moon--or, more correctly, at each other by her light--I felt irresistibly impelled to escape them again; and, pressing a remembrance into the hand of Mrs. Dean, and disregarding her expostulations at my rudeness, I vanished through the kitchen as they opened the house-door; and so should have confirmed Joseph in his opinion of his fellow-servant's gay indiscretions, had he not fortunately recognised me for a respectable character by the sweet ring of a sovereign at his feet.

Positive [1.0..3.4]

This is certainly a beautiful country!

The 'walk in' was uttered with closed teeth, and expressed the sentiment, 'Go to the Deuce:' even the gate over which he leant manifested no sympathising movement to the words; and I think that circumstance determined me to accept the invitation: I felt interested in a man who seemed more exaggeratedly reserved than myself.

Joseph was an elderly, nay, an old man: very old, perhaps, though hale and sinewy.

One end, indeed,

reflected splendidly both light and heat from ranks of immense pewter dishes, interspersed with silver jugs and tankards, towering row after row, on a vast oak dresser, to the very roof.

He'll love and hate

equally under cover, and esteem it a species of impertinence to be loved or hated again.

I took a seat at the end of the hearthstone opposite that towards which my landlord advanced, and filled up an interval of silence by attempting to caress the canine mother, who had left her nursery, and was sneaking wolfishly to the back of my legs, her lip curled up, and her white teeth watering for a snatch.

Happily, an

inhabitant of the kitchen made more despatch: a lusty dame, with tucked-up gown, bare arms, and fire-flushed cheeks, rushed into the midst of us flourishing a frying-pan: and used that weapon, and her tongue, to such purpose, that the storm subsided magically, and she only remained, heaving like a sea after a high wind, when her master entered on the scene.

Guests are so exceedingly rare in this house that I and my dogs, I am willing to own, hardly know how to receive them.

I

found him very intelligent on the topics we touched; and before I went home, I was encouraged so far as to volunteer another visit to-morrow.

'You are the proper person to ask me.'

I began to doubt whether he were a servant or not: his dress and speech were both rude, entirely devoid of the superiority observable in Mr. and Mrs. Heathcliff; his thick brown curls were rough and uncultivated, his whiskers encroached bearishly over his cheeks, and his hands were embrowned like those of a common labourer: still his bearing was free, almost haughty, and he showed none of a domestic's assiduity in attending on the lady of the house.

My neighbour struck me as bordering on repulsive;
I knew, through experience, that I was tolerably attractive.
'Ah, certainly--I see now: you are the favoured possessor of the
beneficent fairy,' I remarked, turning to my neighbour.
Having approached this structure, I looked inside, and
perceived it to be a singular sort of old-fashioned couch, very
conveniently designed to obviate the necessity for every member of the
family having a room to himself.
In vapid listlessness I leant my head against the window, and continued
spelling over Catherine Earnshaw--Heathcliff--Linton, till my eyes
closed; but they had not rested five minutes when a glare of white
letters started from the dark, as vivid as spectres--the air swarmed with
Catherines; and rousing myself to dispel the obtrusive name, I discovered
my candle-wick reclining on one of the antique volumes, and perfuming the
place with an odour of roasted calf-skin.
I insist on perfect sobriety and
silence.
I had just fastened our
pinafores together, and hung them up for a curtain, when in comes Joseph,
on an errand from the stables.
there's good books eneugh if ye'll read 'em: sit ye
down, and think o' yer sowls!"
too liberally; and swears he will reduce him to his right
place--'

I began to nod drowsily over the dim page: my eye wandered from
manuscript to print.
For a moment I considered it absurd that I should
need such a weapon to gain admittance into my own residence.
He had his
private manner of interpreting the phrase, and it seemed necessary the
brother should sin different sins on every occasion.
Seventy times seven times have I plucked up my hat and
been about to depart--Seventy times seven times have you preposterously
forced me to resume my seat.
'Seventy times seven times didst thou gapingly contort thy
visage--seventy times seven did I take counsel with my soul--Lo, this is
human weakness: this also may be absolved!
The first creak of the oak startled him like an electric
shock: the light leaped from his hold to a distance of some feet, and his
agitation was so extreme, that he could hardly pick it up.

I suppose that she wanted to get
another proof that the place was haunted, at my expense.
Scarcely were these words uttered when I recollected the association of
Heathcliff's with Catherine's name in the book, which had completely
slipped from my memory, till thus awakened.

I blushed at my
inconsideration: but, without showing further consciousness of the
offence, I hastened to add--'The truth is, sir, I passed the first part
of the night in--' Here I stopped afresh--I was about to say 'perusing
those old volumes,' then it would have revealed my knowledge of their
written, as well as their printed, contents; so, correcting myself, I
went on--'in spelling over the name scratched on that window-ledge.
Heathcliff lifted his hand, and the speaker sprang to a safer distance,
obviously acquainted with its weight.

My human fixture and her satellites rushed to welcome me; exclaiming,
tumultuously, they had completely given me up: everybody conjectured that
I perished last night; and they were wondering how they must set about
the search for my remains.

However, having studied
for an interval, with a fist on either knee, and a cloud of meditation
over her ruddy countenance, she ejaculated--'Ah, times are greatly
changed since then!'

Yes, yes, he's rich enough to live in a finer house
than this: but he's very near--close-handed; and, if he had meant to flit
to Thrushcross Grange, as soon as he heard of a good tenant he could not
have borne to miss the chance of getting a few hundreds more.

'Well, Mrs. Dean, it will be a charitable deed to tell me something of my
neighbours: I feel I shall not rest if I go to bed; so be good enough to
sit and chat an hour.'

Before I came to live here, she commenced--waiting no farther invitation
to her story--I was almost always at Wuthering Heights; because my mother
had nursed Mr. Hindley Earnshaw, that was Hareton's father, and I got
used to playing with the children: I ran errands too, and helped to make
hay, and hung about the farm ready for anything that anybody would set me
to.

We crowded round, and over Miss Cathy's head I had a peep at a dirty,
ragged, black-haired child; big enough both to walk and talk: indeed, its
face looked older than Catherine's; yet when it was set on its feet, it
only stared round, and repeated over and over again some gibberish that
nobody could understand.

The master tried to explain the matter; but he was really half dead with
fatigue, and all that I could make out, amongst her scolding, was a tale
of his seeing it starving, and houseless, and as good as dumb, in the

streets of Liverpool, where he picked it up and inquired for its owner. Miss Cathy and he were now very thick; but Hindley hated him: and to say the truth I did the same; and we plagued and went on with him shamefully: for I wasn't reasonable enough to feel my injustice, and the mistress never put in a word on his behalf when she saw him wronged.

He

was not insolent to his benefactor, he was simply insensible; though knowing perfectly the hold he had on his heart, and conscious he had only to speak and all the house would be obliged to bend to his wishes.

By his knack of sermonising and pious discoursing, he contrived to make a great impression on Mr. Earnshaw; and the more feeble the master became, the more influence he gained.

Every object she saw, the moment she crossed the threshold, appeared to delight her; and every circumstance that took place about her: except the preparing for the burial, and the presence of the mourners.

'There will more come of this business than you reckon on,' I answered, covering him up and extinguishing the light.

The

mistress visited her often in the interval, and commenced her plan of reform by trying to raise her self-respect with fine clothes and flattery, which she took readily; so that, instead of a wild, hatless little savage jumping into the house, and rushing to squeeze us all breathless, there 'lighted from a handsome black pony a very dignified person, with brown ringlets falling from the cover of a feathered beaver, and a long cloth habit, which she was obliged to hold up with both hands that she might sail in.

I removed the habit, and there shone forth beneath a grand plaid silk frock, white trousers, and burnished shoes; and, while her eyes sparkled joyfully when the dogs came bounding up to welcome her, she dared hardly touch them lest they should fawn upon her splendid garments.

I smelt the rich scent of

the heating spices; and admired the shining kitchen utensils, the polished clock, decked in holly, the silver mugs ranged on a tray ready to be filled with mulled ale for supper; and above all, the speckless purity of my particular care--the scoured and well-swept floor.

He hung about

me for a while, and having screwed up his courage, exclaimed abruptly--'Nelly, make me decent, I'm going to be good.'

He ran to

the window and I to the door, just in time to behold the two Lintons descend from the family carriage, smothered in cloaks and furs, and the

Earnshaws dismount from their horses: they often rode to church in winter.

The little party recovered its equanimity at sight of the fragrant feast.

Mr. Earnshaw carved bountiful platefuls, and the mistress made them merry with lively talk.

Well, you must allow me to leap over some three years; during that space Mrs. Earnshaw--'

'No, no, I'll allow nothing of the sort!
I could fancy a love
for life here almost possible; and I was a fixed unbeliever in any love
of a year's standing.

'I certainly esteem myself a steady, reasonable kind of body,' she said; 'not exactly from living among the hills and seeing one set of faces, and one series of actions, from year's end to year's end; but I have undergone sharp discipline, which has taught me wisdom; and then, I have read more than you would fancy, Mr. Lockwood.

However, if I am to follow my story in true gossip's fashion, I had better go on; and instead of leaping three years, I will be content to pass to the next summer--the summer of 1778, that is nearly twenty-three years ago.'

CHAPTER VIII

On the morning of a fine June day my first bonny little nursling, and the last of the ancient Earnshaw stock, was born.

We were busy with the hay
in a far-away field, when the girl that usually brought our breakfasts came running an hour too soon across the meadow and up the lane, calling me as she ran.

I, as zealous as
herself, hurried eagerly home to admire, on my part; though I was very sad for Hindley's sake.

His treatment of the latter was enough to make
a fiend of a saint.

The long light
hair curled slightly on the temples; the eyes were large and serious; the figure almost too graceful.

'Yes,' she answered; 'but he looked better when he was animated; that is his everyday countenance: he wanted spirit in general.'

Catherine and he were constant companions still at his seasons of respite from labour; but he had ceased to express his fondness for her in words, and recoiled with angry suspicion from her girlish caresses, as if

conscious there could be no gratification in lavishing such marks of affection on him.

The contrast resembled what you see in exchanging a bleak, hilly, coal country for a beautiful fertile valley; and his voice and greeting were as opposite as his aspect.

'It's a good opportunity, now that master is away,' I answered aloud: 'he hates me to be fidgeting over these things in his presence.

And so it was: he turned

abruptly, hastened into the house again, shut the door behind him; and when I went in a while after to inform them that Earnshaw had come home rabid drunk, ready to pull the whole place about our ears (his ordinary frame of mind in that condition), I saw the quarrel had merely effected a closer intimacy--had broken the outworks of youthful timidity, and enabled them to forsake the disguise of friendship, and confess themselves lovers.

It expressed, plainer than words could do, the intensest anguish at having made himself the instrument of thwarting his own revenge.

'To be sure,

considering the exhibition you performed in his presence this afternoon, I might say it would be wise to refuse him: since he asked you after that, he must either be hopelessly stupid or a venturesome fool.'

'And he will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood, and I shall be proud of having such a husband.'

I love all his looks, and

all his actions, and him entirely and altogether.

You remember

him, I daresay, when he was just such another as that chubby thing: nearly as young and innocent.

Apparently taking up another subject, she recommenced in a short time.

Ere this speech ended I became sensible of Heathcliff's presence.

'Joseph is here,' I answered, catching opportunely the roll of his cartwheels up the road; 'and Heathcliff will come in with him.

'Give me Hareton,

while you get the supper, and when it is ready ask me to sup with you.

--My love for

Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees.

My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary.

Then we came to the agreement

that we would let him ask, if he wanted any; for we feared particularly

to go into his presence when he had been some time alone.
He replied audibly enough, in a fashion which made my companion vociferate, more clamorously than before, that a wide distinction might be drawn between saints like himself and sinners like his master.

It's bonny
behaviour, lurking amang t' fields, after twelve o' t' night, wi' that fahl, flaysome divil of a gipsy, Heathcliff!

To prevent it, I shall send him about his business
this very morning; and after he's gone, I'd advise you all to look sharp:
I shall only have the more humour for you.'

Little Hareton was nearly five years old, and I
had just begun to teach him his letters.

I told the master he got rid of all decent people only to run
to ruin a little faster; I kissed Hareton, said good-by; and since then
he has been a stranger: and it's very queer to think it, but I've no
doubt he has completely forgotten all about Ellen Dean, and that he was
ever more than all the world to her and she to him!

Mr. Heathcliff has just honoured me with a call.
how could I offend a man who was charitable
enough to sit at my bedside a good hour, and talk on some other subject
than pills and draughts, blisters and leeches?

I stated before that I didn't know how he
gained his money; neither am I aware of the means he took to raise his
mind from the savage ignorance into which it was sunk: but, with your
leave, I'll proceed in my own fashion, if you think it will amuse and not
weary you.

I got Miss Catherine and myself to Thrushcross Grange; and, to my agreeable disappointment, she behaved infinitely better than I dared to expect.

They were both very attentive to
her comfort, certainly.

Well, we must be for ourselves in the long run; the mild and generous are only more justly selfish than the domineering; and it ended when circumstances caused each to feel that the one's interest was not the chief consideration in the other's thoughts.

He looked vexed, and suggested the kitchen as a more suitable place for him.

Will
that please you, dear?

I descended, and found Heathcliff waiting under the porch, evidently anticipating an invitation to enter.

He followed my guidance without waste of words, and I ushered him into the presence of the master and mistress, whose flushed cheeks betrayed signs of warm talking.

He had grown a tall, athletic, well-formed man; beside whom my master seemed quite slender and youth-like.

His upright carriage suggested the idea of his having been in the army.

you don't deserve this welcome.

I advised her to value him the more for his affection.

He must get accustomed to him, and he may as well like him: considering how Heathcliff has reason to object to him, I'm sure he behaved excellently!"

'He is reformed in every respect, apparently: quite a Christian: offering the right hand of fellowship to his enemies all around!'

Catherine, also, deemed it judicious to moderate her expressions of pleasure in receiving him; and he gradually established his right to be expected.

We had all remarked, during some time, that Miss Linton fretted and pined over something.

'I love him more than ever
you loved Edgar, and he might love me, if you would let him!' I know he couldn't love a Linton; and yet he'd be quite capable of marrying your fortune and expectations: avarice is growing with him a besetting sin.

They sit up all night together continually, and Hindley has been borrowing money on his land, and does nothing but play and drink: I heard only a week ago--it was Joseph who told me--I met him at Gimmerton: "Nelly," he said, "we's hae a crowner's 'quest enow, at ahr folks'.

The day after, there was a justice-meeting at the next town; my master was obliged to attend; and Mr. Heathcliff, aware of his absence, called rather earlier than usual.

'She has been dying for your sake
several weeks, and raving about you this morning, and pouring forth a deluge of abuse, because I represented your failings in a plain light, for the purpose of mitigating her adoration.

The sun shone yellow on its grey head, reminding me of summer; and I cannot say why, but all at once a gush of child's sensations flowed into my heart.

That was my first idea on observing an elf-locked, brown-eyed boy setting his ruddy

countenance against the bars.

He then stepped across the pavement to her, and said something: she seemed embarrassed, and desirous of getting away; to prevent it, he laid his hand on her arm.

Having

levelled my palace, don't erect a hovel and complacently admire your own charity in giving me that for a home.

Quarrel with Edgar, if you

please, Heathcliff, and deceive his sister: you'll hit on exactly the most efficient method of revenging yourself on me.'

He stood on the hearth with folded arms, brooding on his evil thoughts; and in this position I left them to seek the master, who was wondering what kept Catherine below so long.

He saw the master first, and

made a hasty motion that she should be silent; which she obeyed, abruptly, on discovering the reason of his intimation.

'I've been so far forbearing with you, sir,' he said quietly; 'not that I was ignorant of your miserable, degraded character, but I felt you were only partly responsible for that; and Catherine wishing to keep up your acquaintance, I acquiesced--foolishly.'

If I don't floor him now, I shall murder him some time; so, as you value his existence, let me get at him!'

Will you give up

Heathcliff hereafter, or will you give up me?

I incautiously

gave the account aloud, and she heard me; for she started up--her hair flying over her shoulders, her eyes flashing, the muscles of her neck and arms standing out preternaturally.

I made up my mind for broken bones, at least; but she only glared about her for an instant, and then rushed from the room.

Isabella and he had had an hour's interview, during which he tried to elicit from her some sentiment of proper horror for Heathcliff's advances: but he could make nothing of her evasive replies, and was obliged to close the examination unsatisfactorily; adding, however, a solemn warning, that if she were so insane as to encourage that worthless suitor, it would dissolve all bonds of relationship between herself and him.

CHAPTER XII

While Miss Linton moped about the park and garden, always silent, and almost always in tears; and her brother shut himself up among books that

he never opened--wearying, I guessed, with a continual vague expectation that Catherine, repenting her conduct, would come of her own accord to ask pardon, and seek a reconciliation--and she fasted pertinaciously, under the idea, probably, that at every meal Edgar was ready to choke for her absence, and pride alone held him from running to cast himself at her feet; I went about my household duties, convinced that the Grange had but one sensible soul in its walls, and that lodged in my body.

Are you speaking the truth
about him now?

'No, you forget, Mrs. Linton,' I suggested, 'that you have eaten some food with a relish this evening, and to-morrow you will perceive its good effects.'

Bonny bird; wheeling over our heads in the
middle of the moor.

'You shall account more
clearly for keeping me ignorant of this!'

Well, it will teach me to be
careful next time.

'Heathcliff frequently visits at the Grange,' answered I, 'though more on the strength of the mistress having known him when a boy, than because the master likes his company.'

The doctor, on examining the case for himself, spoke hopefully to him of its having a favourable termination, if we could only preserve around her perfect and constant tranquillity.

It is right to establish a good
understanding at the beginning.'

Love for my life urged a compliance; I stepped over the threshold to wait till the others should enter.

Mr. Heathcliff was nowhere visible; and Joseph, whom I followed to the stables, and requested to accompany me in, after staring and muttering to himself, screwed up his nose and replied--'Mim!

He walked up and down, with his hands in his pockets, apparently quite forgetting my presence; and his abstraction was evidently so deep, and his whole aspect so misanthropical, that I shrank from disturbing him again.

Taking
advantage of his recovered attention, I exclaimed--'I'm tired with my
journey, and I want to go to bed!

The
old cynic chose to be vastly offended at this nicety; assuring me, repeatedly, that 'the barn was every bit as good' as I, 'and every bit as wollsome,' and wondering how I could fashion to be so conceited.

There was a carpet--a good one, but the pattern was obliterated by dust; a fireplace hung with cut-paper, dropping to pieces; a handsome oak-bedstead with ample crimson curtains of rather expensive material and modern make; but they had evidently experienced rough usage: the vallances hung in festoons, wrenched from their rings, and the iron rod supporting them was bent in an arc on one side, causing the drapery to trail upon the floor.

I was

endeavouring to gather resolution for entering and taking possession, when my fool of a guide announced,--'This here is t' maister's.'

Will Hathecliff bide sich bonny ways, think ye?

Mr. Heathcliff awoke me; he

had just come in, and demanded, in his loving manner, what I was doing there?

He sends his love, ma'am, and his wishes for your happiness, and his pardon for the grief you have occasioned; but he thinks that after this time his household and the household here should drop intercommunication, as nothing could come of keeping it up.'

I blamed

her, as she deserved, for bringing it all on herself; and ended by hoping that he would follow Mr. Linton's example and avoid future interference with his family, for good or evil.

Before you leave this house, I

must exact a promise from you that you'll get me an interview with her: consent, or refuse, I will see her!

'Well, sir,' returned I, 'I hope you'll consider that Mrs. Heathcliff is accustomed to be looked after and waited on; and that she has been brought up like an only daughter, whom every one was ready to serve. I can hardly regard her in the light of a rational creature, so obstinately has she persisted in forming a fabulous notion of my character and acting on the false impressions she cherished.'

If she desired to go, she might: the nuisance of her presence outweighs the gratification to be derived from tormenting her!'

And

take a good look at that countenance: she's near the point which would suit me.

But

wouldn't it be better to prevent my coming in contact with them, or their master?

You say she is often

restless, and anxious-looking: is that a proof of tranquillity?

I reflected as the good woman descended to receive the

doctor: and not exactly of the kind which I should have chosen to amuse me.

I'll extract wholesome medicines from Mrs. Dean's bitter herbs; and firstly, let me beware of the fascination that lurks in Catherine Heathcliff's brilliant eyes.

She is, on the whole, a very fair narrator, and I don't think I could improve her style.

There was

a manservant left to keep the house with me, and we generally made a practice of locking the doors during the hours of service; but on that occasion the weather was so warm and pleasant that I set them wide open, and, to fulfil my engagement, as I knew who would be coming, I told my companion that the mistress wished very much for some oranges, and he must run over to the village and get a few, to be paid for on the morrow.

Her thick, long

hair had been partly removed at the beginning of her illness, and now she wore it simply combed in its natural tresses over her temples and neck.

The

minute after a step traversed the hall; the open house was too tempting for Heathcliff to resist walking in: most likely he supposed that I was inclined to shirk my promise, and so resolved to trust to his own audacity.

He neither spoke nor loosed his hold for some five minutes, during which period he bestowed more kisses than ever he gave in his life before, I daresay: but then my mistress had kissed him first, and I plainly saw that he could hardly bear, for downright agony, to look into her face!

Nelly, you think you are

better and more fortunate than I; in full health and strength: you are sorry for me--very soon that will be altered.

He sent a rapid glance through the half-open door of the chamber, and, ascertaining that what I stated was apparently true, delivered the house of his luckless presence.

I noticed on that occasion how much selfishness there is even in a love like Mr. Linton's, when he so regretted Catherine's blessed release!

'Gone to heaven, I hope; where we may, every one, join her, if we take due warning and leave our evil ways to follow good!'

Indeed, I shouldn't have

discovered that he had been there, except for the disarrangement of the drapery about the corpse's face, and for observing on the floor a curl of light hair, fastened with a silver thread; which, on examination, I ascertained to have been taken from a locket hung round Catherine's neck. Catherine had an awfully perverted taste to

esteem him so dearly, knowing him so well.

'Earnshaw accomplished this ere his guest reached the front; he then came and brought his chair to the other side of my table, leaning over it, and searching in my eyes for a sympathy with the burning hate that gleamed from his: as he both looked and felt like an assassin, he couldn't exactly find that; but he discovered enough to encourage him to speak. Nobody alive would regret me, or be ashamed, though I cut my throat this minute--and it's time to make an end!"

'I guessed he uttered those words, at least, though his voice was hardly intelligible.

In my flight through the kitchen I bid Joseph speed to his master; I knocked over Hareton, who was hanging a litter of puppies from a chair-back in the doorway; and, blessed as a soul escaped from purgatory, I bounded, leaped, and flew down the steep road; then, quitting its windings, shot direct across the moor, rolling over banks, and wading through marshes: precipitating myself, in fact, towards the beacon-light of the Grange.

When I could get him to listen, I saw it pleased him that his sister had left her husband; whom he abhorred with an intensity which the mildness of his nature would scarcely seem to allow.

I used to draw a comparison between him and Hindley Earnshaw, and perplex myself to explain satisfactorily why their conduct was so opposite in similar circumstances.

Linton, on the contrary, displayed the true courage of a loyal and faithful soul: he trusted God; and God comforted him.

'His father died in debt,' he said; 'the whole property is mortgaged, and the sole chance for the natural heir is to allow him an opportunity of creating some interest in the creditor's heart, that he may be inclined to deal leniently towards him.'

He maintained a hard, careless deportment, indicative of neither joy nor sorrow: if anything, it expressed a flinty gratification at a piece of difficult work successfully executed.

She was the most winning thing that ever brought sunshine into a desolate house: a real beauty in face, with the Earnshaws' handsome dark eyes, but the Lintons' fair skin and small features, and yellow curling hair.

Fortunately, curiosity and a quick intellect made her an apt scholar: she learned rapidly and eagerly, and did honour to his teaching.

She wrote to inform her brother of the probable conclusion of a four-months' indisposition under

which she had suffered, and entreated him to come to her, if possible; for she had much to settle, and she wished to bid him adieu, and deliver Linton safely into his hands.

'Nay,' said the servant, 'don't be hard on the bonny lass, Mrs. Dean.

I picked up her hat, and approached to reinstate it; but perceiving that the people of the house took her part, she commenced capering round the room; and on my giving chase, ran like a mouse over and under and behind the furniture, rendering it ridiculous for me to pursue.

Try to be cheerful now; the travelling is at an end,
and you have nothing to do but rest and amuse yourself as you please.'

'Come, come, there's a good child,' I whispered, leading him in.

You must try to love
him, as you did your mother, and then he will love you.'

'She
often talked of uncle, and I learnt to love him long ago.

'Oh, all children love their parents,' I said.

An early ride on such a beautiful morning is much
preferable to an hour's more sleep.'

'Is Wuthering Heights as pleasant a place as Thrushcross Grange?'

You will, perhaps, think the
building old and dark at first; though it is a respectable house: the
next best in the neighbourhood.

And you will have such nice rambles on
the moors.

'Why, Master Linton,' said I, 'three hundred miles is a great distance;
and ten years seem very different in length to a grown-up person compared
with what they do to you.

But he clung to me with growing
trepidation; and on Mr. Heathcliff's taking a seat and bidding him 'come
hither' he hid his face on my shoulder and wept.

I have a room up-stairs, furnished for him in handsome
style; I've engaged a tutor, also, to come three times a week, from
twenty miles' distance, to teach him what he pleases to learn.

I saw the old
man-servant shared largely in his master's scorn of the child; though he
was compelled to retain the sentiment in his heart, because Heathcliff
plainly meant his underlings to hold him in honour.

Mr. Edgar encouraged me to gain information: he thought a great deal
about him, I fancy, and would have run some risk to see him; and he told
me once to ask the housekeeper whether he ever came into the village?

She
said he had only been twice, on horseback, accompanying his father; and
both times he pretended to be quite knocked up for three or four days

afterwards.

Time wore on at the Grange in its former pleasant way till Miss Cathy reached sixteen.

She bounded before me, and returned to my side, and was off again like a young greyhound; and, at first, I found plenty of entertainment in listening to the larks singing far and near, and enjoying the sweet, warm sunshine; and watching her, my pet and my delight, with her golden ringlets flying loose behind, and her bright cheek, as soft and pure in its bloom as a wild rose, and her eyes radiant with cloudless pleasure.

'You suppose papa is highly esteemed and respected, then?'

You'll get home earlier for the ease; and you shall receive a kind welcome.'

Come, Nelly, hold your tongue--it will be a treat for her to look in on us.

'My design is as honest as possible.

His features were pretty yet, and his eye and complexion brighter than I remembered them, though with merely temporary lustre borrowed from the salubrious air and genial sun.

Linton, don't you recall your cousin, that you used to tease us so with wishing to see?'

Catherine had reached her full height; her figure was both plump and slender, elastic as steel, and her whole aspect sparkling with health and spirits.

'Now I think of it,

I'd better tell you.

But I think he's safe from her love.

'I don't know,' she replied, casting a longing look to the door, and evidently eager to be active.

Don't you think Hindley would be proud of his son, if he could see him?

And the best of it is, Hareton is damnable fond of me!

I'm really extremely angry; only I'm so pleased I can't show it!

Her father sat reading at the table; and I, on purpose, had sought a bit of work in some unripped fringes of the window-curtain, keeping my eye steadily fixed on her proceedings.

A fine bundle of trash you study in your leisure hours, to be sure: why, it's good enough to be printed!

'I didn't once think of loving him till--'

'_Loving_!'

cried I, as scornfully as I could utter the word.

I might just as well talk of loving the
miller who comes once a year to buy our corn.

And being really fully as much inclined
to laugh as scold--for I esteemed it all girlish vanity--I at length
relented in a measure, and asked,--'If I consent to burn them, will you
promise faithfully neither to send nor receive a letter again, nor a book
(for I perceive you have sent him books), nor locks of hair, nor rings,
nor playthings?'

She had his companionship no
longer; I esteemed it a duty to supply its lack, as much as possible,
with mine: an inefficient substitute; for I could only spare two or three
hours, from my numerous diurnal occupations, to follow her footsteps, and
then my society was obviously less desirable than his.

I love him better than myself, Ellen; and I know it by this:
I pray every night that I may live after him; because I would rather be
miserable than that he should be: that proves I love him better than
myself.'

He pines for
kindness, as well as love; and a kind word from you would be his best
medicine.

Cathy began searching for some water; she lighted on a pitcher in the
dresser, filled a tumbler, and brought it.

Next to papa and Ellen, I love you better than
anybody living.

'But papa says you would love me better than him and all the
world, if you were my wife; so I'd rather you were that.'

Sit quite still and don't talk: but you may sing a song, if
you can sing; or you may say a nice long interesting ballad--one of those
you promised to teach me; or a story.

I doubt whether he'll see spring, indeed.

And lucky it is for us
that his father took him: the kinder he was treated, the more tedious and
selfish he'd be.

She selected
one of her own favourites, and got forward steadily about an hour; then
came frequent questions.

You'll be
sick, keeping up so long, Ellen.'

The man took his charge stealthily
across the grass towards the stable.

He said the pleasantest

manner of spending a hot July day was lying from morning till evening on a bank of heath in the middle of the moors, with the bees humming dreamily about among the bloom, and the larks singing high up overhead, and the blue sky and bright sun shining steadily and cloudlessly.

He

wanted all to lie in an ecstasy of peace; I wanted all to sparkle and dance in a glorious jubilee.

That night, though, he easily recovered his good humour: he was charmed with two or three pretty songs--_your_ songs, Ellen; and when I was obliged to go, he begged and entreated me to come the following evening; and I promised.

He patted Minny's neck,

and said she was a bonny beast, and appeared as if he wanted me to speak to him.

And believe that your kindness has made me
love you deeper than if I deserved your love: and though I couldn't, and
cannot help showing my nature to you, I regret it and repent it; and
shall regret and repent it till I die!"

'It requires some study; and so I'll leave you to your rest,
and go think it over.'

'It may be very possible that I
should love her; but would she love me?

However,
master, you'll have plenty of time to get acquainted with him and see
whether he would suit her: it wants four years and more to his being of
age."

Miss Catherine is a good girl: I don't fear that
she will go wilfully wrong; and people who do their duty are always
finally rewarded.'

Cathy was a powerful ally at home; and between them they at length
persuaded my master to acquiesce in their having a ride or a walk
together about once a week, under my guardianship, and on the moors
nearest the Grange: for June found him still declining.

I, for my part, began to fancy my
forebodings were false, and that he must be actually rallying, when he
mentioned riding and walking on the moors, and seemed so earnest in
pursuing his object.

he panted, trembling, and retaining her hand as if
he needed its support, while his large blue eyes wandered timidly over
her; the hollowness round them transforming to haggard wildness the
languid expression they once possessed.

This is nearly yours, only there
are clouds; but then they are so soft and mellow: it is nicer than

sunshine.

An indefinite alteration had come over his whole person and manner.

I couldn't affirm that you are,' observed my young lady, wondering at his pertinacious assertion of what was evidently an untruth.

And, though I'm glad he's better in health, I'm sorry he's so much less pleasant, and so much less affectionate to me.'

'You think he is better in health, then?'

And so we left him, scarcely conscious of our departure, so absorbed was he in anticipating his father's approach.

His nephew's offering of thanks was duly delivered, Miss Cathy gently touching on the rest: I also threw little light on his inquiries, for I hardly knew what to hide and what to reveal.

Catherine's face was

just like the landscape--shadows and sunshine flitting over it in rapid succession; but the shadows rested longer, and the sunshine was more transient; and her poor little heart reproached itself for even that passing forgetfulness of its cares.

My

young mistress alighted, and told me that, as she was resolved to stay a very little while, I had better hold the pony and remain on horseback; but I dissented: I wouldn't risk losing sight of the charge committed to me a minute; so we climbed the slope of heath together.

He didn't cast a glance

towards my companions, though they were sufficiently near for Linton's sobs to be audible; but hailing me in the almost hearty tone he assumed to none besides, and the sincerity of which I couldn't avoid doubting, he said--

'It is something to see you so near to my house, Nelly.

'You are very stiff,' said Heathcliff, 'I know that: but you'll force me to pinch the baby and make it scream before it moves your charity.'

Mr. Heathcliff,

perceiving us all confounded, rose, and expeditiously made the tea himself.

You're in no danger; but if you hinder me--Linton, I love papa better than you!'

Zillah won't be here to-night; you must undress yourself.

'I don't much mind speaking of his amiable qualities now,' he answered; 'because she must either accept him or remain a prisoner, and you along with her, till your master dies.'

Complying eagerly, I beheld Hareton, laden with food enough to last me all day.

You can bid her go to the Grange at once, if she be able, and carry a message from me, that her young lady will follow in time to attend the squire's funeral."

On entering the house, I looked about for some one to give information of Catherine.

'Master Heathcliff,' I resumed, 'have you forgotten all Catherine's kindness to you last winter, when you affirmed you loved her, and when she brought you books and sung you songs, and came many a time through wind and snow to see you?

She wept to miss one evening, because you would be disappointed; and you felt then that she was a hundred times too good to you: and now you believe the lies your father tells, though you know he detests you both.

All her nice

books are mine; she offered to give me them, and her pretty birds, and her pony Minny, if I would get the key of our room, and let her out; but I told her she had nothing to give, they were all, all mine.

We had just agreed the best destiny which could await Catherine would be a permission to continue resident at the Grange; at least during Linton's life: he being allowed to join her there, and I to remain as housekeeper.

In

two hours, I called Joseph to carry him up again; and since then my presence is as potent on his nerves as a ghost; and I fancy he sees me often, though I am not near.

'You are a boastful champion,' replied Heathcliff; 'but I don't like you well enough to hurt him: you shall get the full benefit of the torment, as long as it lasts.

But I'm

glad I've a better, to forgive it; and I know he loves me, and for that reason I love him.

I shall be a great deal more comfortable now; and you'll have a better chance of keeping me underground, when I get there.

My

young lady asked some aid of her when she first came; but Mr. Heathcliff told her to follow her own business, and let his daughter-in-law look after herself; and Zillah willingly acquiesced, being a narrow-minded, selfish woman.

Joseph was fain, I believe, of the lad's removal; Hareton seemed a thought bothered: though he was more taken up with staring at Catherine than thinking of Linton.

Young

folks are always the better for an elder's over-looking; and Hareton, with all his bashfulness, isn't a model of nice behaviour.

I let him

know that his cousin would very likely sit with us, and she had been always used to see the Sabbath respected; so he had as good leave his guns and bits of indoor work alone, while she stayed.

"He'd take it very kind--he'd be much obliged."

I took particular notice

of him this time; but then he does his best apparently to make the least of his advantages.

so intimate that I think it

strange you won't come and speak to me.

He bent his eyes to the ground, and walked moodily in.

Living among clowns and misanthropists, she probably cannot appreciate a better class of people when she meets them.

'What a realisation of something more romantic than a fairy tale it would have been for Mrs. Linton Heathcliff, had she and I struck up an attachment, as her good nurse desired, and migrated together into the stirring atmosphere of the town!'

Having rested awhile, I directed my servant to inquire the way to the village; and, with great fatigue to our beasts, we managed the distance in some three hours.

His handsome features

glowed with pleasure, and his eyes kept impatiently wandering from the page to a small white hand over his shoulder, which recalled him by a smart slap on the cheek, whenever its owner detected such signs of inattention.

'It's a blazing shame, that I

cannot oppen t' blessed Book, but yah set up them glories to sattan, and all t' flaysome wickednesses that iver were born into th' wORLD!

It was enough if he were obliged to

see her once or twice a day.

and

though in the beginning she either left it at his approach, or quietly joined in my occupations, and shunned remarking or addressing him--and though he was always as sullen and silent as possible--after a while, she changed her behaviour, and became incapable of letting him alone: talking at him; commenting on his stupidity and idleness; expressing her wonder how he could endure the life he lived--how he could sit a whole evening staring into the fire, and dozing.

'Mr. Hareton will ask the master to send you up-stairs, if you don't behave!'

On Easter Monday, Joseph went to Gimmerton fair with some cattle; and, in

the afternoon, I was busy getting up linen in the kitchen.

I overheard no further distinguishable talk, but, on looking round again, I perceived two such radiant countenances bent over the page of the accepted book, that I did not doubt the treaty had been ratified on both sides; and the enemies were, thenceforth, sworn allies.

The intimacy thus commenced grew rapidly; though it encountered temporary interruptions.

Earnshaw was not to be civilized with a wish, and my young lady was no philosopher, and no paragon of patience; but both their minds tending to the same point--one loving and desiring to esteem, and the other loving and desiring to be esteemed--they contrived in the end to reach it.

He's

forgotten all I've done for him, and made on him, and goan and riven up a whole row o' t' grandest currant-trees i' t' garden!

Then he drew his hand over his eyes, stood a moment to collect himself apparently, and turning anew to Catherine, said, with assumed calmness--'You must learn to avoid putting me in a passion, or I shall really murder you some time!

Your love will make him an outcast and a beggar.

The two new friends established themselves in the house during his absence; where I heard Hareton sternly check his cousin, on her offering a revelation of her father-in-law's conduct to his father.

The red fire-light glowed on their two bonny heads, and revealed their faces animated with the eager interest of children; for, though he was twenty-three and she eighteen, each had so much of novelty to feel and learn, that neither experienced nor evinced the sentiments of sober disenchanted maturity.

That sounds as if I had been labouring the whole time only to exhibit a fine trait of magnanimity.

They have yearned towards it so long, and so unwaveringly, that I'm convinced it will be reached--and soon--because it has devoured my existence: I am swallowed up in the anticipation of its fulfilment.

'Where should good news come from to me?'

And then I set myself to reflect how I had tended him in infancy, and watched him grow to youth, and followed him almost through his whole course; and what absurd nonsense it was to yield to that sense of horror.

He drew it

nearer, and then rested his arms on the table, and looked at the opposite wall, as I supposed, surveying one particular portion, up and down, with

glittering, restless eyes, and with such eager interest that he stopped breathing during half a minute together.

'Come now,' I exclaimed, pushing some bread against his hand, 'eat and drink that, while it is hot: it has been waiting near an hour.'

Joseph shuffled up and made a noise, but resolutely refused to meddle with him.

But the country folks, if you ask them, would swear on the Bible that he walks: there are those who speak to having met him near the church, and on the moor, and even within this house.

'Yes,' answered Mrs. Dean, 'as soon as they are married, and that will be on New Year's Day.'

'And who will live here then?'

They will live in the kitchen, and the rest will be shut up.'